

## THE SOUNDING BOARD

# University Music Unit Wins Praise

BY ALBERT GOLDBERG

They seem to do things in a big way at Brigham Young University of Provo, Utah. The school's combined choruses of 300 singers and symphony orchestra of more than 100 palyers — claimed to be the largest musical unit ever to tour the Western United States — turned up in Shrine Auditorium Wednesday night for a program divided between Bach's "Magnificat" and Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast." The only disturbing factor was that a lamentable lack of publicity held the attendance to slender proportions.

Brigham Young University, which numbers 15,500 students and a faculty of 600, obviously ranks music highly among its activities, and if this concert was a fair sample can well be proud of its accomplishments. While large-scale musical effort is no novelty today in the universities, the Brigham Young forces easily proved themselves among the best.

### Fine Teamwork

Discipline, seriousness and an enthusiastic feeling for teamwork marked both chorus and orchestra. Despite its size the chorus is malleable and flexible, happily well balanced between the men's and women's voices, sings with good tonal quality and enunciates the words clearly.

The orchestra was equally secure in its duties, with an unusually solid string section, excellent brass and winds, and supple as an accompanying unit. The conductor was Crawford Gates, a man who can handle large forces with firm command and musical sensibility. To the last man and woman everyone sang and played as if he or she had a personal responsibility for the final result.

### Devoted Singing

The Bach "Magnificat" was clear in texture, flexible in execution and sung with impressive devotion. If one could have sometimes wished for a weightier body of tone, this was partly due to the lack of a shell and ceiling on the wide, open stage; the sound a tendency to go up rather than out. The soloists all displayed good voices and an admirable sense of style: Sharon King, Sheila Sorenson, sopranos; Marilyn Stanley, Cynthia Williams, contraltos; Jack Morris, Mike Suzuki, tenors, and Roy Samuelson, bass.

While the tone may have

seemed light in the Bach, no such charge could be placed against the chorus in "Belshazzar's Feast," which piled up big masses of sound and realized sharply dramatic contrasts. Mr. Samuelson sang the solos with a bass voice of fine power and wide range of color; he is a singer of real professional potential. The orchestra, which had played the Bach so cleanly and precisely, showed its capacities in the larger scope of Walton's brilliant instrumentation and contributed importantly to a vividly colored performance.